

EXHIBIT A



[michelle aston, my eccentric, sweet friend](#)

:: it's not a "problem" until you're in denial... 21.02.2008



Image via [h.andras .xms.](#)

The Geek Squad has been known for their file-rifling, porn-stealing issues [for a while](#) (thanks to [Consumerist](#)). But only when local blogger [Ariel Waldman](#) asked about their classic, "it's sex so who cares" issues at a San Francisco marketing and customer service summit conference, did Best Buy's Geek Squad's privacy, porn, sex and anti-blogger attitude come to light. (Long after everyone who read a blog knew that Geek Squad had been going through users' personal files, and learned the disgusting truth when a guilt-racked Best Buy employee [was the whistle blower](#) on what they all did with porn performer [Jasmine Grey](#)'s trust and livelihood — fessing up only after Grey died in a tragic car crash.) On video: [Ariel](#) asked, and [Eddie](#) caught it on film. Plus *more*... We are the media, indeed — this week's column is [The Geek Squad's ongoing porn problem / Bloggers catch the tech service pilfering porn and it turns into a local PR disaster, while Violet Blue wonders 'Is nothing sacred?'](#) Snip from the midsection:

(...) No public statements have been made from the Geek Squad's PR department about the porn theft exposed by Consumerist, their exploitation of Jasmine Grey, or the Geek Squad's practice of examining their customers' files during the process of equipment repair.

That is, until the [Customer Service is the New Marketing](#) summit and conference here in San Francisco two weeks ago. The Geek Squad came with a team who [hovered on a balcony over the conference](#) while Geek Squad founder Robert Stephens took the stage for his talk, entitled "Marketing is a Tax You Pay for Being Unremarkable." Little did he realize that while he was onstage, there were full-on back-channel conversations [on various social networking instant message sites](#) about Geek Squad's nonconsensual "customer service."

So when it came time for Q & A, local blogger, respected social community management expert, professional social media insights consultant, [Engadget columnist](#), and community manager for [Pownce](#) [Ariel Waldman](#) spoke up.

Rather than drop off Stephens at [Kink.com](#) for a lesson in respect at the (feminist-identified) boot heels of Princess Donna, Waldman asked Stephens for a statement in front of his peers, asking what kind of outreach the Geek Squad plans on doing to make their customers feel safe from exploitation like this in the future.

You can watch their exchange [here at the 46:10 mark](#) (the session was recorded by local [GETV](#) vlogger [Eddie Code](#)). You can also see [Waldman's take](#) on his response to her question here:

"Robert's response immediately jumped into a cringe-worthy response, by saying first and foremost that bloggers are not journalists and don't ever hold themselves to the same standards as journalists. He then called out Ben Popken from [Consumerist](#) for asking for his response to these issues, but having already published the story. He said if bloggers publish the story first without waiting for his response that it's not a 2-way conversation and he just won't respond to it at all. He

said bloggers will need to someday need to hold themselves to journalist standards because they have far too much competition to not to. So, he didn't answer AT ALL about things they're trying to do to make people or their customers feel better about these issues. He was defensive about the question, instead of being sensitive to the issue, which was disappointing. If you're for enabling conversation within your company, you should be for enabling positive conversation online as well, instead of writing it off as bloggers only being a form of disrespectful trolls."

Personally, my reaction would have been to get on the [Ocean](#) with Princess Donna for an emergency takedown, followed by a trip to the Armory for some serious blogosphere discipline and knee-pad-needed lessons in sexual privacy. Followed by a dog-collar-and-leash march over to the [Electronic Frontier Foundation](#) for more sexual identity and privacy deprogramming.

According to Consumerist in the breakout post "[Geek Squad Hatched Plot To Harvest Porn From Pornstar Jasmine Grey's Hard Drive, Days Before She Died In Car Crash](#)," it wasn't an isolated employee (or 'one luggage handler,' as Stephens might say): An entire team passed [Jasmine Grey's](#) pictures around. The Geek Squad whistle-blower told Consumerist (...) [Link](#).

See also: My friend Jesse Jane's post, [How the Geek Squad Scored My Porn](#) (on [her kickass blog](#)), which I wish I'd caught before filing my column.

Hey! Notice anything different around here? Leave a comment of love for the man behind the curtain and tell me what you think (in the WTFMTFBBQ comments!? Do they work?), and the hours of non-paid volunteer work which made the beginning of tinynibbles version xxx.666 (aka version puttytat) possible. Thank you [0x0000 \(Jonathan Moore\)](#)! The redesign is making me drool and quiver... It's gorgeous. I no longer have to fire up 2 old computers and an external hard drive to make a change to my site!

Aaaand: I'm deeply conflicted about the beginning, but [as you might have already seen on Laughing Squid](#) — I'm an (and on) [Internet Superstar](#). The interview (halfway through) is one of the best I've done *ever* and I really like [Martin Sargent](#) way too much, and I'm frighteningly happy about the interview itself. I just regret the way too long, passe and pastiche intro jokes about something, that as a friend put in an email yesterday: "(...) this woman has used and abused your name and cost you time, money, blood, sweat, and tears. You never should have had to suffer this indignity." (Like her recent pregnant gangbang porn a friend just told me about found on a clip site, for example... Ugh.) Still, it's a great interview and you see me admit how tough it is to be me and be a flawed human who dates, and the embarrassingly obvious things on my sexual "to-do" lists. I look way better in the (unscripted) interview than in the still-frame shot, and endless thanks to the [love @ Madame S](#) for providing the sex toy props to help me keep Sargent under control.

Enjoy the new blog... I've never been so stoked about my blog (= my life) ever! Except I'm still having problems making it look right in drafts or if I have links *really* linked... Patience and love, please :D

Geek Squad fun update: A reader emailed me this so we can all make patches and wear them (*thanks, S!*)...



[Comments RSS](#)

22 Responses to "it's not a "problem" until you're in denial..."

1. [# 1 Nobilis](#) Says:

[February 21st, 2008 at 9:36 am](#)

Thanks for allowing comments on your blog, VB. It's a good thing to open up the dialogue.

I hope you have the anti-spammer hammer poised and waiting?

2. [# 2 Jackson West](#) Says:

[February 21st, 2008 at 9:39 am](#)

Woohoo, comments! Looks great. This just popped up in my RSS, which also worked fine. No bugs to report here.

3. [# 3 Danny](#) Says:

[February 21st, 2008 at 10:06 am](#)

<3

4. [# 4 lance](#) Says:

[February 21st, 2008 at 10:24 am](#)

iz gorgeeus, no? yes!

5. [# 5 Alan Bostick](#) Says:

[February 21st, 2008 at 11:42 am](#)

Yay comments!

That wasn't a denial, it was an evasion: the "bloggers don't really count" evasion. (Tell that to Alberto Gonzales.)

If you can forgive the off-topic link pandering, have you heard about the study that indicates the risk to youths from so-called sexual predators is greatly exaggerated? Read all about it at my blog (<http://www.spicejar.org/asiplease/archives/000669.html>)

6. [# 6 Emily](#) Says:

[February 21st, 2008 at 12:16 pm](#)

The site looks amazing. I no longer have to wait for the site to load because I have a PC and Vista... (the devil hates me) Great job, XOXO to whoever did this for you!!!!

-E

7. [# 7 Kurt](#) Says:

[February 21st, 2008 at 1:47 pm](#)

Very nice upgrade. I like how it keeps the best aspects of the old design, while managing to look much cleaner.

8. [# 8 addycat](#) Says:

[February 21st, 2008 at 2:20 pm](#)

yahoo - so neat and tidy - excellent upgradeness.

9. [# 9 Trekkie](#) Says:

[February 21st, 2008 at 6:05 pm](#)

OMG. Comments! Fun.

Looks great. Congrats on the upgrade hope it wasn't completely painful, unless you like those kinda upgrades.

10. [# 10 aliyah](#) Says:

[February 21st, 2008 at 6:05 pm](#)

a very nice surprise when i browsed here tonight. i like it indeed! especially if you have comments enabled for interaction with people.

though, i suspect there will be more than enough trolls to spoil the intelligent dialogue.

11. [# 11 The Muscle Bound Geek:David Shorb](#) Says:

[February 21st, 2008 at 7:53 pm](#)

Hey Violet,

I love the great redesign, it is fantastic. totally awesomeness.

Have A Great Day!

The Muscle Bound Geek

David Shorb

12. [# 12 Billifer](#) Says:

[February 21st, 2008 at 8:00 pm](#)

Fantastic work, Violet! Thank you *so* much for opening up comments! *Squee* There've been many times I've wanted to respond to something in one of your posts and was unable to do so without sending you an email — and I know you get countless emails every day. As Nobilis (#1) mentioned, spamkilling is going to be a big thing. If you're using WordPress, I've found amazing results with Spam Karma.

13. [# 13 La Pelirojita](#) Says:

[February 21st, 2008 at 9:33 pm](#)

I heart the new design but I miss the picture of you at the top! I loved to see your smiling face welcoming me into the site and I'm sad to see it go.

14. [# 14 twizted](#) Says:

[February 21st, 2008 at 10:12 pm](#)

Like the new blog! Congrats, and thanks for allowing comments.

I remember Robert Stevens when he was a young, cocky head of an upstart little tech support company. He was always a salesman. He wowed my less 'pooter-savvy bosses back in the day. It didn't hurt that he was smoking hot back then—hard to imagine now. That was a pretty defensive response, and pretty corporate-standard too. The only thing that would effect change for Geek Squad would have to be financial losses of some sort. Keep up the info!

15. [# 15 janevruth](#) Says:

[February 22nd, 2008 at 12:20 am](#)

Super upgrade. ty

Very nice upgrade.

16. [# 16 Jaden @ Screenwriting for Hollywood](#) Says:

[February 22nd, 2008 at 12:27 am](#)

This sexy woman / Apple computer image is GORGEOUS! Your selection of images and the rest of your site are very tasteful.

Your new site works much faster and I can see everything now — yay!

17. [# 17 Loca Yo Alondra](#) Says:

[February 22nd, 2008 at 7:44 am](#)

I love the new update to the blog and ab fab love what do you for the community. I almost fainted in pleasure at having seen you at Gay Pride in San Francisco last year and have been a fan of yours for many years. Thanks for being open and blunt about everything and not shying away from it. You and the rest of the GLBT in my hometown praise you. :D

18. [# 18 LaurenB](#) Says:

[February 22nd, 2008 at 6:37 pm](#)

Hooray! I *can* has talk at pretty lady!

Now if only you had more time to podcast. ;D

...not that I should be listening to something that fascinating whilst driving in a urban area anyway.

19. [# 19 EllaRegina](#) Says:

[February 24th, 2008 at 12:50 am](#)

Comments! Finally! Congratulations!

Nice redesign, too. Looks good!

20. [# 20 Adorkable Grrl](#) Says:

[February 24th, 2008 at 1:32 pm](#)

O.o!!!

Hawt new layout, Violet!

So psyched at the comment option... YAY!

And, patches & t-shirts w/Thief Squad are defs in order. What a tool Robert Stephens is... Good on Ariel for trying to nail him, though.

21. [# 21 violet](#) Says:

[February 25th, 2008 at 3:27 pm](#)

thank you all so much for all the comments and compliments! I'm ecstatic to finally turn this thing — um, my blog life — into more of a real conversation. and yes, the troll/spam hammer is hair-triggered. I like how I can even get super-specific on who I can ban... ah, troll control :D

::smooch::

22. [# 22 Anthony Kennerson](#) Says:
[February 25th, 2008 at 6:10 pm](#)

Hey, Violet....nice to see that you are finally allowing open comments...been a fan for a long while.

On the antics of the "Thief Squad" and the attempted CYA of their head honcho: says a heck of a lot towards the lack of respect that sex performers get, doesn't it? That they can have their livelihoods taken from them without any consequences whatsoever; that their privacy can be violated at the drop of a finger on a keyboard.....pretty disgusting, if I may say so. The part about ratting private users to the authorities doesn't help their cause, either.

And...the redesign, is, to use a word, NICE.

Keep bringing it.

Anthony

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<input type="text"/>	Name (required)
<input type="text"/>	Mail (will not be published) (required)
<input type="text"/>	Website

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